



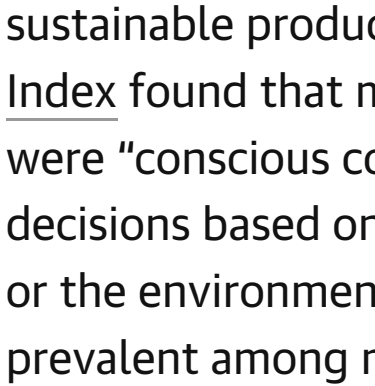
De Bortoli: Going green

# The conscious consumption trend: how one wine label became the ethical choice

De Bortoli Wines' new sustainably produced wine range is proof that winemakers and customers can work together to create a better world.

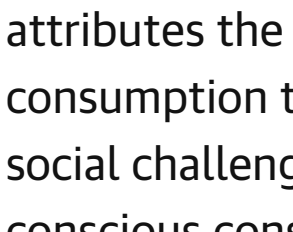
The rise of conscious consumption has given rise to 'mindful quaffing' in the wine industry - a shift that refers to a new interest in wines that are sustainable, vegan or organic. Photograph: hobo\_018/Getty Images

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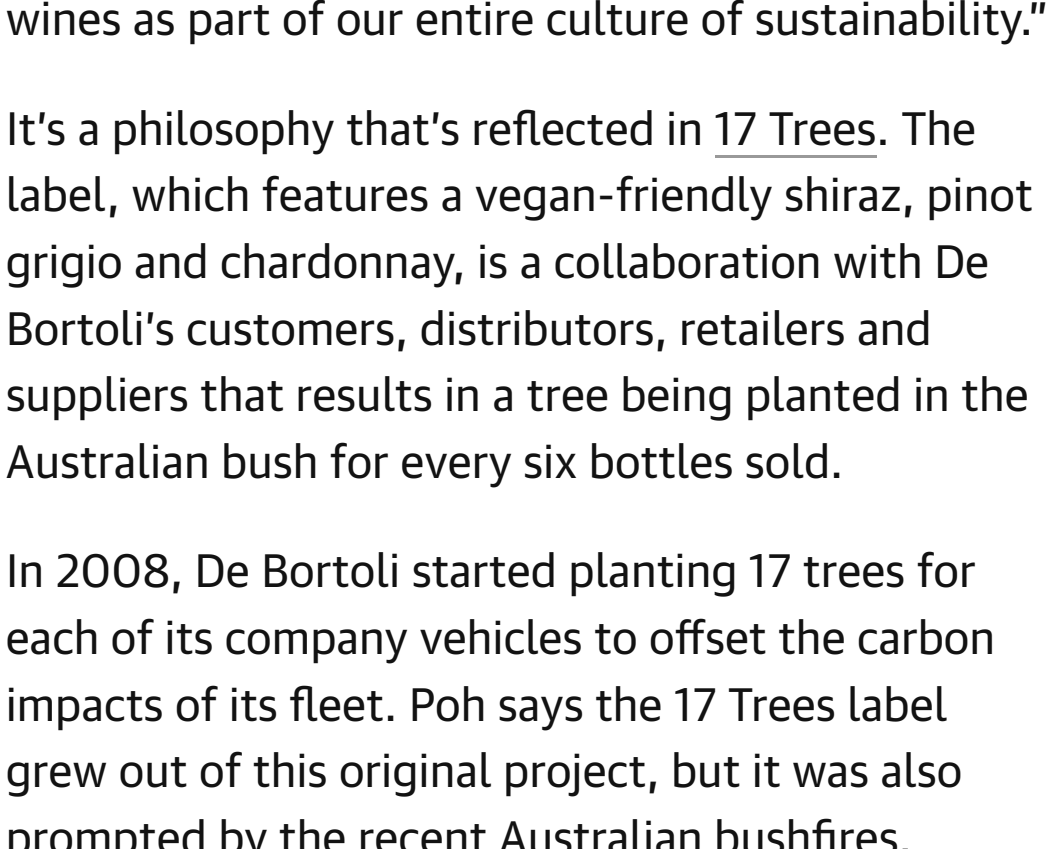


The things we consume have always told powerful stories about our values, class and interests. But these days, the clothes we wear, the food we buy and the wine we drink aren't just expressions of our identities. They can also reflect a cultural desire to create a better world.

Over the past few years, we've witnessed a rise in conscious consumption, spurred by a growing awareness of the social and environmental implications of our buying behaviour. Now, more of us are prepared to invest in ethical choices - whether that means buying jeans from a company with a transparent supply chain or doing our grocery shopping at a local co-op, where profits are returned to local farmers.

According to [Retail & Consumer Marketing Insights](#), an April 2019 report by PwC, 53% of Australian clothes shoppers would pay more for ethical and sustainable products. The 2019 [PayPal mCommerce Index](#) found that more than 55% of Australians were "conscious consumers", making purchasing decisions based on values around ethics, fair trade or the environment, a trend that was more prevalent among millennials. And 2019 research from marketing company Salmat and the Australian Centre for Retail Studies found that 73% of shoppers rated ethical brand behaviour among their three biggest priorities.

Louise Poh, head of marketing at [De Bortoli Wines](#), attributes the move towards conscious consumption to the new visibility of ecological and social challenges. She believes the new wave of conscious consumers is being shaped by the fact that environmental crises are no longer abstract. They have become part of our daily lives.



"Consumers are experiencing more and more changes in our lives," she says. "Bushfires, drought, heatwaves and flooding, as well as the haze in the air. It is very obvious to us that we have to do something because our choices today have a great impact on the future."

Many companies have championed an ethical approach to consumerism. Beauty brand The Body Shop, for example, has been taking a stand against animal testing since 1989. And adventure company Patagonia famously uses 1% of its global sales to fund causes such as the fight against the climate crisis.

Poh says customers are willing to alter their actions to support purpose-driven companies. She also predicts that a company's commitment to values and ethics - including sustainability - is a quality that customers will increasingly expect.

"Behaviour is more important than awareness and customers are willing to change their behaviour to live a more sustainable lifestyle and give back to the environment," she says. "I think in the near future, the commitment to sustainability will become a given, part of the consumer's expectation - just as the consumer expects that food they buy will taste good."

In the wine industry, this has given rise to "mindful quaffing" - a shift that refers to a new interest in wines that are sustainable, vegan or organic. The export volume of Australian organic wine - made from grapes grown using organic methods, such as not using synthetic fertilisers or pesticides - [grew 51% between 2016 and 2019](#).

This market can be dominated by buzzwords - vegan wine, for example, is made without animal products, and "natural wine" may involve minimal intervention. Poh points out that wines that are sustainably produced, however, focus on sustainable and ethical values at every stage.

"Sustainably produced wines cover so much more - you are talking about energy saving, waste management, water management, composting waste," she says. "At De Bortoli we view vegan wines as part of our entire culture of sustainability."

It's a philosophy that's reflected in [17 Trees](#). The label, which features a vegan-friendly shiraz, pinot grigio and chardonnay, is a collaboration with De Bortoli's customers, distributors, retailers and suppliers that results in a tree being planted in the Australian bush for every six bottles sold.

In 2008, De Bortoli started planting 17 trees for each of its company vehicles to offset the carbon impacts of its fleet. Poh says the 17 Trees label grew out of this original project, but it was also prompted by the recent Australian bushfires.

"By January 2020, more than 27.2 million acres 11m hectares of Australian land had been burned," she says. "The magnitude of our fires is incredible, so we decided to drive a collaborative initiative by working with our partners across our entire ecosystem."

De Bortoli has partnered with the not-for-profit [Trillion Trees](#) to plant trees in Australia, and contribute to the organisation's vision of planting 1 trillion trees worldwide.

17 Trees doesn't just speak to consumers' new desire for ethical consumption. It's also proof of the ways in which collaborations between companies and customers can create greater accountability when it comes to achieving sustainable visions in the long term.

"We want to stay focused on driving tree planting," she says. "The consumer can see the number of trees we are planting on our microsite and this is transparent to all our suppliers and distributors. Through 17 Trees our global partners can also help rebuild bushland in Australia. Goodness attracts goodness. Sustainability is a journey, not a destination, and 17 Trees is a brand that has a purpose."

***[Join us to plant a tree. Every six bottles of 17 Trees purchased will go towards planting one tree.](#)***

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